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Proposed Bill No. 802  
Public Hearing: 2-17-15

TO: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE  
FROM: CONNECTICUT TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (CTLA)  
DATE: February 16, 2015

**RE: OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED BILL 802 – AN ACT CONCERNING LIABILITY FOR  
DAMAGE CAUSED BY A POLICE DOG**

The CTLA opposed proposed bill 802 and respectfully contends that the bill should be defeated.

**Insofar as it applies to police officers and municipalities it is unnecessary:**

Connecticut law currently affords police officers and municipalities broad immunities unavailable to other dog owners. *See, Tryon v Branford*, 58 Conn App 702 and *Hazelwood v Bridgeport*, 2013 WL 3970787, Sommer, J. While the CTLA believes that these immunities are unfair and legally unwarranted, our organization is not seeking to overturn or distinguish these decisions at this time.

**The bill unfairly extends municipal immunity to the family of police officers:**

Under Connecticut law, police officers can, and have, made use of Connecticut General Statutes sect. 22-357 when bitten by a dog in the line of work. (e.g., *Wroniak v. Ayala*, 1995 WL 371186, Sheldon, J.). If this bill were to become law, the only private citizens who would be exempt from liability under our “dog bite” statute would be the family of police officers. Our members believe that this bill goes too far in this regard. We do not believe that municipal immunity should shield the keeper of a police dog when the dog is not performing official duties. For example, if the police dog was walked through a park by a police officer’s family member such that it was not performing any official duty and the dog were to attack a small child, no immunity should be afforded.